

PSAP Enrollment in the TSP Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does a PSAP enroll in the TSP program?

A. The first step the PSAP administrator should take is to consult with the telecommunications service provider to determine the per-line cost of TSP coverage. From this, the administrator can determine how many lines to cover. The administrator then contacts the FCC to serve as its federal sponsor, using the information provided below. Next, the administrator contacts the NCS on its web-site to establish an account, and fills out the TSP application. All of this can be done electronically on NCS's TSP web-page. Once the NCS has approved the application, the PSAP notifies the service provider and requests TSP coverage.

FCC TSP email address: tspinfo@fcc.gov

NCS TSP email address: tsp@ncs.gov

Q. How long does this process take?

A. The FCC and NCS have committed to providing sponsorship and approval, in most cases, within one week of the request. This is a substantially quicker approval time, as compared to the 30 days allotted under current rules.

Q. How much does it cost to participate in the TSP program?

A. It depends on the telecommunications service provider and the number of lines covered. Typically, a service provider has a one-time charge for each line selected as well as a monthly per line charge. The one-time charge for a local line is typically about \$100. The monthly per-line charge is typically \$3. It should be noted, however, that each service provider has its own price list, and therefore, a user must consult with its service provider in order to determine the actual cost of TSP coverage and the number of lines it needs to place in the priority restoration program. In most instances, TSP users seek coverage for only a portion of their lines – enough to provide essential coverage during the immediate crisis.

Q. Does a user such as a PSAP need to purchase TSP coverage for all of its telecommunications lines?

A. No. In fact, most TSP users seek coverage for only a portion of their lines. This keeps the cost of coverage more affordable. For example, a PSAP with 10 lines to its 9-1-1 tandem may wish to purchase TSP coverage for only three lines. This would keep the cost of coverage down considerably, yet provide essential

coverage during a crisis. Using this approach, there may be temporary circumstances in which there would be a diminished communications capability (for example, having only 3 of 10 lines in service). However, PSAPs need to weigh this against the possibility of having no service at all if they do not register for the TSP program and, therefore, receive no priority restoration treatment.

Q. During a crisis, how long will it take to have service restored for the lines covered by the TSP program?

A. It depends on the extent of the damage to the critical telecommunications infrastructure and the amount of resources (personnel and spare parts) available to the telecommunications service provider to repair the damage. In any event, the service provider must restore all TSP-designated lines before any others. This is a legal requirement. It should be noted that the TSP program played a critical role in the rapid restoration of telecommunications services in Lower Manhattan following the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001. Despite the extensive damage to the infrastructure, the telecommunications services supporting the New York Stock Exchange, for example, were back in operation in three days.

Q. If a PSAP service contract requires the service provider to restore its service within a specified time frame (e.g., within 24 hours), should it still consider TSP coverage?

A. Yes. In accordance with FCC rules, service providers must restore TSP-designated lines before any others, regardless of whether their service contracts specify restoration time frames. Without TSP coverage, telecommunications service providers will restore all TSP lines first, commercial customers' lines which have contract-designated restoration periods next, and then all other lines. In a post September 2001 world, it is too great a risk to leave our nation's critical 9-1-1 infrastructure exposed in this manner.

04/24/03